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NEMO'S ALMANAC 2020

A literary competition in its 129th year

She couldn't say the word for 'fish'. Nor are his genes undone
by what oafish submarines remain. Aye, sir,
Captain Nemo, sir, we've spotted the junk
in the roads up ahead. What!

Edited by Ian Patterson

Price £4.00

NEMO'S ALMANAC 2020
send to:
Ian Patterson
Queens' College
Cambridge CB3 9ET
or email nemo@nemosalmanac.com

RULES

1. The quotations are to be identified by reference to author, work, and where appropriate stanza or line number or number of chapter, canto, book, act or scene. Ten marks are given for each answer with full references, including a printed source. Incomplete answers, guesses, hazards, and bows drawn at a venture will receive marks on their merits. Marks will be deducted for googling. Extra marks may be given for answers found only by one or two competitors, and also for exceptionally good, interesting, or otherwise learned or entertaining answers, at the Editor's discretion.
2. The Prizes are cheques in amounts dictated by the modest budget of the Almanac. No competitor may take a first prize two years running, or any prize at all in the fourth year after three consecutive winning years.
3. Answers are to be typed or legibly written, leaving a good margin for marks (*mutatis mutandis* if emailing). Full name and address are to be written on the first page. The entry must reach the Editor not later than 2 September 2020. Please mark your entry 'NEMO'. Entries may also be submitted by email to nemo@nemosalmanac.com.
4. If an appropriately sized and properly stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed, entries will be returned with an answer sheet.
5. A pseudonym may be used, but prize-winners' actual names may be published.
6. No author is quoted more than once. No extract is in translation.
7. The Editor's decision is final in every case.

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JANUARY

1

Most bitter cold today, froze sharp within doors all day long—tho' the Sun shone very bright. It being the last Day of the Year, we sat up to night, till after 12 o'clock, then drank a happy New Year to all our Friends and went to bed.

2

He was the one man I met up in the wood
That stormy New Year's morning; and at first sight,
Fifty yards off, I could not tell how much
Of the strange tripod was a man.

3

The bells ring out, the year is born,
And shall we hope or shall we mourn?
Shall we embrace the young, new year,
Or shall we turn back lingering eyes,
  To the low bier,
Where in his pall the old year lies?

4

There are, maybe, some suspicions
  Of an alcoholic presence . . .
'Tak' a sup of this, my wumman!' . . .
  New Year comes but once a twelve-month.

5

The grove is all a pale frail mist,
    The new year sucks the sun.
Of all the kisses that we kissed
    Now which shall be the one?

6

What a vile little diary! But I am determined to keep it this year.

FEBRUARY

1

I cannot write with this debauched pen, but I must stumble along and tell you that I do admire poor old Henry, and actually read through the Wings of a Dove last summer, and thought it such an amazing acrobatic feat, partly of his, partly of mine, that I now look upon myself and Henry James as partners in merit. I made it all out. But I felt very ill for some time afterwards.

2

What Improvements would a Woman have made, who is so Susceptible of Impressions from what she reads, had she been guided to such Books as have a tendency to enlighten the Understanding and rectify the Passions, as well as to those which are of little more use than to divert the Imagination?

3

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes
Among its golden broideries;

4

I read a score of books on womanhood
To prove, if women do not think at all,
They may teach thinking (to a maiden aunt
Or else the author),—books that boldly assert
Their right of comprehending husband's talk
When not too deep, and even of answering
With pretty "may it please you," or "so it is,"—

5

O! Alice could read passing well,
    And she was conning then
Dan Ovid's mazy tale of loves,
    And gods, and beasts, and men.

6

She read one of the conversations between Rasselas and Imlac, in a high-pitched majestic voice; and when she had ended, she said. 'I imagine I am now justified in my preference of Dr. Johnson, as a writer of fiction.'

MARCH

1
I was sitting upstairs in a bus, cursing the waste of time, and pouring my life away on one of those insane journeys across London — while gradually the wavering motion of this precarious glass salon, that flung us about softly like trusses of wheat or Judo Lords, began its medicinal work inside the magnetic landscape of London.

2
As we come up at Baker Street
Where tubes and trains and 'buses meet
There's a touch of fog and a touch of sleet;
And we go on up Hampstead way
Towards the closing in of day . . .

3
It is raining again, a small tedious drizzle. The buildings are big and dark and wet, hazed by reflected light; and the buses are scarlet and alive. I am too late to be at school in time for Janet, even if I take a taxi. So I climb onto a bus, and sit surrounded by damp and stuffy-smelling people.

4
They had missed two buses outside the tube station in their excited chatter. A third came along. George grabbed Elizabeth's arm:
'Come on, here's our bus. Let's go on top.'
The bus-top was empty except for a couple spooning on a back-seat. George and Elizabeth a little haughtily went to the very front.

5
Now he had never seen this notice before, nor could he imagine where the omnibus went to. S. of course was for Surbiton, and R.C.C. meant Road Car Company. But what was the meaning or the other C.? Coombe and Maiden, perhaps, of possibly "City." Yet it could not hope to compete with the South-Western. The whole thing, the boy reflected, was run on hopelessly unbusiness-like lines. Why no tickets from the other end?

6
One day he climbed to the top of a bus,
in London it was, before it blew down.
The upstairs was empty. He chose the back seat.
Looking out of the window to find her
My darling! My darling!
His love.

APRIL

1

Such faire effects of joy and love
  None can expresse but you:
Then revell midst your ayrie Bowres
  Till all the clouds doe sweat,
That pleasure may be powr'd in showres
  On this triumphant Seat.

2

At last,
The Clouds consign their Treasures to the Fields
And, softly shaking on the dimpled Pool
Prelusive Drops, let all their Moisture flow,
In large Effusion o'er the freshen'd World.

3

Before the sun dipped below the black mass of Kettleness, standing boldly athwart the western sky, its downward way was marked by myriad clouds of every sunset-colour—flame, purple, pink, green, violet, and all the tints of gold; with here and there masses not large, but of seemingly absolute blackness, in all sorts of shapes, as well outlined as colossal silhouettes.

4

From parted Clouds the Moon her radiance throws
On the wild Waves and all the Danger shows;
But shews them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour! gloom in glory drest!
This for a moment, and then Clouds again,
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.

5

The pool, fed by an artesian well, with a high iron content, was a pale shade of green. It was a fine day. In the west there was a massive stand of cumulus cloud so like a city seen from a distance—from the bow of an approaching ship—that it might have had a name. Lisbon. Hackensack.

6

Study, O study the chart in the paper:
  Look at the glass and be guided by that!
What's a Solidified Stratum of Vapour?
  Doesn't it mean I shall ruin my hat?

MAY

1
Thence away to the Strand, to my bookseller's, and there staid an hour, and bought the idle rogueish book, "L'escholle des filles"; which I have bought in plain binding, avoiding the buying of it better bound, because I resolve, as soon as I have read it, to burn it

2
At the back of the rather spacious and sombre shop (which by reason of the bays of bookshelves seemed larger than it really was) came a small room, with a doorway, but no door, into the shop. This was the proprietor's den. Seated at his desk therein he could see through a sort of irregular lane of books to the bright oblong of the main entrance, which was seldom closed. There were more books to the cubic foot in the private room even than in the shop. They rose in tiers to the ceiling and they lay in mounds on the floor; they also covered most of the flat desk and all the window-sill;

3
I Was driuen into a quandarie Gentlemen, whether I might send this my Pamphlet to the Printer or to the pedler. I thought it to bad for the presse, & to good for the packe. But seing my folly in writing to be as great as others, I was willing my fortune should be as ill as any mans. We commonly see the booke that at Christmas lyeth bound on the Stacioners stall, at Easter to be broken in the Haberdasshers shop, which sith it is the order of proceding, I am content this winter to haue my doings read for a toye, that in sommer they may be ready for trash.

4
There were only two or three other people in the shop, and one of those was a sea scout who came in every day after school to read another chapter of I Flew with the Führer. He marked the place with a piece of string weighted down with a boiled sweet.

5
Soon shall the kennels swell with rapid streams,
And rush in muddy torrents to the Thames.
The bookseller, whose shop's an open square,
Foresees the tempest, and with early care
Of learning strips the rails

6
Also it is a humane trade which is not capable of being vulgarized beyond a certain point. The combines can never squeeze the small independent bookseller out of existence as they have squeezed the grocer and the milkman.

JUNE

1
I went down to see Tennyson, who is very peculiar-looking, tall, dark, with a fine head, long black flowing hair, and a beard; oddly dressed, but there is no affectation about him.

2
Forget your spas, your Baden-Badens
(All along, down-and-out along-lea):
Come and live in Chlorine Gardens
With Paul Muldoon and Edna Longley—

3
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is arrived; I have seen her; I think her avarice, her dirt, and her vivacity are all increased. Her dress, like her languages, is a galimatias of several countries; the groundwork, rags; and the embroidery, nastiness. She wears no cap, no handkerchief, no gown, no petticoat, no shoes.

4
Expecting a bomb or angel through the roof,
Cold as a saint in Canterbury Cathedral,
This gentleman with Adam on his mind
Sits writing verses on cats that speak:

5
During our excursion we fell in with Wordsworth, Miss Wordsworth, and Coleridge, who were, at the same time, making a tour in a vehicle that looked very like a cart. Wordsworth and Coleridge were entirely occupied in talking about poetry;

6
Ford invited me to luncheon at a favourite restaurant of his, the Brasserie Lipp in the Boulevard Saint-Germain. He was then in his middle fifties, walrus moustache, puffy face, half-open mouth. I saw what the novelist, Mary Butts, meant, when she had said: 'It's extraordinary what a fuss is always being made about who is to get into bed with old Ford', but he seemed amiable enough in a somewhat bufferish genre.

JULY

1
You will be greatly shocked and grieved to hear that the Raven is no more. He expired at a few minutes after Twelve o'Clock at noon. He had been ailing (as I told you t'other night) for a few days, but we anticipated no serious result, conjecturing that a portion of the white paint he swallowed last summer might be lingering about his vitals without having any serious effect upon his constitution.

2
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children

3
the raven flew away
Knowing no reason nor questioning, knowing neither
The man's face nor his name, for there was never a place
For names in the brain of a raven, 'though its eyes
Were a dove's eyes in a black corvine head.

4
The raven was getting into years; he had a gray and grisly look; he halted on one leg; his joints were stiff, his legs rough as the bark of a cork-tree, and he was covered with large warts: his eyes had a bleared and sinister expression; and he passed most of his time idling in the sun under a south wall, against which grew the delicious plums of the garden.

5
At eye's envious corner
Crow's-feet copy veining on a stained leaf;
Cold squint steals sky's colour; while bruit
Of bells calls holy ones, her tongue
Backtalks at the raven

6
The dining-room had been illuminated with unwonted splendour; one could see the cobwebs in the corners, and the places where the wallpaper was peeling off, and a large patch of green and brown and yellow where the damp was coming through. But one could also see more of the artistic treasures of the Ravens, for hung around the room in pairs were the masterpieces of Gawain Raven, R.A. (1827-84), and Mordred Raven, A.R.A. (1840-1900).

AUGUST

1.
Fame like a drunkard consumes the house of the soul
Exposing that you have worked for only this—
Ah, that I had never suffered this treacherous kiss
And been left in darkness to founder and fail.

2
In fact, Lord Byron is the spoiled child of fame as well as fortune. He has taken a surfeit of popularity, and is not contented to delight, unless he can shock the public. He would force them to admire in spite of decency and common sense—he would have them read what they would read in no one but himself, or he would not give a rush for their applause. He is to be "a chartered libertine", from whom insults are favours, whose contempt is to be a new incentive to admiration.

3
Yet, to leave Fame, still with such eyes and that bright hair!
God! If I might! And before I go hence
Take in her stead
To our tossed bed,
One little dream, no matter how small, how wild.

4
Call me England's fame's fond lover,
Her fame to keep, her fame to recover.

5
And yet every man must and will be immortal, as he hopes, and extend his fame to our antipodes, when as half, no not a quarter of his own province or city, neither knows nor hears of him—but say they did, what's a city to a kingdom, a kingdom to Europe, Europe to the world, the world itself that must have an end, if compared to the least visible star in the firmament, eighteen times bigger than it?

6
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of Noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;

SEPTEMBER

1

About three o'clock in the afternoon of that day, which was very hot, the people of this village were surprised by a shower of Aphides, or smother-flies, which fell in these parts. Those that were walking in the street at that juncture found themselves covered with these insects, which settled also on the hedges and gardens, blackening all the vegetables where they alighted.

2

The Earwig armd: the tender Maggot emblem of immortality:
The Flea: Louse: Bug: the Tape-Worm: all the Armies of Disease:
Visible or invisible to the slothful vegetating Man.

3

Doll never flies to cut her Lace,
Or throw cold Water in her Face,
Because she heard a sudden Drum,
Or found an Earwig in a Plum.

4

This wax-mannequin nude, the florist rose,
She of the long stem and too glossy leaf,
Is dead to honest greenfly and leaf-cutter:
Behind plate-glass watches the yellow fogs.

5

'Sylphs! on each Oak-bud wound the wormy galls,
With pigmy spears, or crush the venom'd balls;
Fright the green Locust from his foamy bed,
Unweave the Caterpillar's gluey thread;
Chase the fierce Earwig, scare the bloated Toad,
Arrest the Snail upon his slimy road'

6

Hurt no living thing:
    Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
    Nor cricket chirping cheerily

OCTOBER

1
Time was when, in the pastoral retreat,
Th'unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
T'invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd
By drunken howlings;

2
To return at all across the years to the gates of the paradise of the first larger initiations is to be ever so tempted to pass them, to push in again and breathe the air of this, that and the other plot of rising ground particularly associated, for memory and gratitude, with the quickening process.

3
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

4
I sat on the roof of the lemon-house, with the lake below and the snowy mountain opposite, and looked at the ruins on the old, olive-fuming shores, at all the peace of the ancient world still covered in sunshine, and the past seemed to me so lovely that one must look towards it, backwards, only backwards, where there is peace and beauty and no more dissonance.

5
Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age
The child is grown, and puts away childish things.
Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies.

6
After Oxford, I worked in London, where I wrote a poetry of despair. It was a continuous cry for what I had lost, for the hills and fields, and the vixen wood, with the dog-fox barking at night. I imagined myself dying inside and so I came to this village to find my health. My wholeness. That is why I am here.

NOVEMBER

1
In world, world
of terror,
filling up fast with
unintelligible
signs:

2
He wished for annihilation, to lie down in eternal oblivion, in an insensibility, which compared with what he experienced was scarcely less enviable than beatitude itself. Horror, detestation, revenge, inexpressible longings to shake off the evil, and a persuasion that in this case all effort was powerless, filled his soul even to bursting.

3
'Must be getting clear of the worst now.... Some of the other ships are just black dots on white spots now....Still going.... We're still hammering away....Must have a chance now....I guess we've really got a chance now....Everybody still staring aft....Oh God! The whole sea's—'
And there it cut off.

4
The wet hands of the castor-tree at night brush me and I shriek, thinking that at last I am caught up with. The clouds move across the sky heavy and tubular. They gather and I am terror-struck to see them form a long black rainbow out of the mountain and disappear across the sea. The Thing is at hand. There is nothing to do but crouch and receive God's wrath.

5
Though by the door, in the fright
of it's done, it's shot in a
click, though it's not light yet
the smells are sharp the bricks
don't blink, you blind as you
tell it this is action action

6
I had written the above, destined to be the opening paragraph of my memoirs, when something happened which was so extraordinary and so horrible that I cannot bring myself to describe it even now after an interval of time and although a possible, though not totally reassuring, explanation has occurred to me.

DECEMBER

1
If you don't guess the authors and care to write to me in confidence, enclosing stamped addressed envelope and a sixpenny postal order for my ivory haystack fund, I will let you have the authors' names. It will be a pleasure. Now, MORE QUOTATIONS.

2
And Davy Jones's locker burst wide open
To throw to the surface ledgers and lavatory seats
And all the bric-a-brac of warehouses and churches
With bones and ghosts and half forgotten quotations.

3
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life?
You had no time for indignation
and I leave mine in a quotation.

4
'The title is, of course, a quotation from Tennyson's poem Tithonus. And, by the way, while we're on the subject—who was Tithonus?'
Silence. He looks from face to face. Nobody knows.

5
Still I'd respect you more if you could bury
Mabie, and Lyman Abbot and George Woodberry,
For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.
Dulness herself, that abject spirit, chortles
To see your forty self-baptized immortals

6
And now let us go out on the terrace, where "droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost," while the evening star "washes the dusk with silver." At twilight nature becomes a wonderfully suggestive effect, and is not without loveliness, though perhaps its chief use is to illustrate quotations from the poets.

Answers to Nemo 2019

cover: Anne Sexton, 'February 17th'

JANUARY
1. Marianne Moore, 'In the public garden', ll. 25-28
2. John Betjeman, 'Sunday Morning, King's Cambridge', ll. 2-6
3. Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, III
4. William Wordsworth 'Inside of King's College Chapel', ll. 9-12
5. Rosamund Lehmann, *Dusty Answer*, Part Three, 3
6. Salley Vickers, *Cousins*, Ch. 15

FEBRUARY
1. Sir Thomas Wyatt, Blame not my lute, ll. 1-4
2. Thomas Moore, 'Hush, sweet lute', ll. 1-4
3. Sir Walter Scott, *Quentin Durward*, Ch. IV
4. A. C. Swinburne, 'The Lute and the Lyre', final stanza
5. Thomas Campion, 'When to her lute Corrina sings', ll. 1-4
6. Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 4/II, p. 390

MARCH
1. Douglas Adams, *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, Ch. 35
2. Stevie Smith, 'Thoughts on the Person from Porlock', section 2, ll. 20-22
3. Walter de la Mare, 'Winged Chariot', ll. 952-55
4. Robert Graves, 'Antigonus: An Eclogue', ll. 8-12
5. R. S. Thomas, 'A Person from Porlock', ll. 1-5
6. Douglas Dunn, 'Kabla Khun', ll. 1-4

APRIL
1. Felicia Hemans, 'Genius Singing to Love', ll. 1-6
2. Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Ch. 5
3. William Wordsworth, 'The Solitary Reaper', stanza 4, ll. 3-5
4. W. H. Hudson, *A Shepherd's Life*, Ch xi
5. Matthew Sweeney, 'Nowhere Man', from *My Life as a Painter*
6. Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, 6.ix.iv

MAY
1. Thomas Love Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, Ch. XIV
2. W. M. Praed, 'School and Schoolfellows', ll. 61-4
3. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Ch. 8, 'Lestrygonians'
4. E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, Book VIII, ll. 183-88
5. Gavin Ewart, 'The Victorian Singing', ll. 5-9
6. Anthony Powell, *At Lady Molly's*, Ch. 3

JUNE
1. Thomas Hardy, 'At a Country Fair', first stanza
2. Sir Thomas Browne, *Gardens of Cyrus*, Ch. 3
3. Eavan Boland, 'Hanging curtains with an abstract pattern in a child's room', ll. 1-5
4. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, second part
5. Sylvia Plath, 'Sonnet: To Time',ll. 9-12
6. Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia*, 'Witches, and Other Night-Fears'

JULY
1. John Gay, *The Fan*, Book III, ll. 153-56
2. George Etheredge, *The Man of Mode*; or *Sir Fopling Flutter*, Act 1, sc. i
3. Ezra Pound, 'Fan-Piece for her Imperial Lord', complete
4. Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*, Ch. 2
5. Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Act 4
6. Christopher Middleton, 'Yes, Mr Brecht', ll. 5-8

AUGUST
1. Vita Sackville-West, *The Garden*, 'Spring'
2. John Webster, *The White Devil*, Act 5, sc iv
3. Ted Hughes, 'The Mole'. ll. 1-4
4. Keats, 'Sleep', ll. 11-14
5. D. H. Lawrence, 'Second Best'
6. Joseph Conrad, *Victory*, Part III, Ch. 10

SEPTEMBER
1. G. M. Hopkins, 'Hurrahing in Harvest', ll. 1-3
2. David Gascoyne, 'Park in Autumn', ll. 17-20
3. Ali Smith, *Autumn*, final section
4. Anna Letitia Barbauld, 'Autumn: a fragment', ll. 17-22
5. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, Part 3, Ch. V
6. Vernon Scannell, 'Autumn', ll. 7-9

OCTOBER
1. William Cowper, 'Retirement', ll. 487-88
2. William Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act II, sc i
3. A. Conan Doyle, 'The Retired Colourman', *The Case-book of Sherlock Holmes*
4. Paul Muldoon, 'The Mirror', ll. 14-17
5. H. G. Wells, *Kipps: the story of a simple soul*, Book 3, i, 6
6. Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*, 'Epilogue'

NOVEMBER

1. A. G. Macdonnell, *England, Their England*, Ch. VII
2. T. S. Eliot, 'The Journey of the Magi', ll. 26-7
3. Isaac Rosenberg, 'Summer in Winter: Six thoughts', ll. 22-25,
4. Peter Porter, 'Sixes and Sevens', stanza 3
5. Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, p. 108
6. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Revenge', stanza 1, ll.5-7

DECEMBER

1. James Shirley, 'The glories of our blood and state', ll. 9-10
2. John Dryden, *All for Love*, Act V, sc. i, 451-56
3. Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto VII, lxviii, ll. 6-8
4. Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, Vol. II, Ch. IV
5. Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, IV, ll. 7-12
6. Philip Larkin, 'Coming', ll. 5-10

Marks and Prizes 2019

First Prize	
Gli Amici	718
Second Prize	
Caroline Heal	716
Third Prize	
Jenny Naish	710
Elspeth Christie	728 (ineligible for a prize)
Brian Jordan	712 (ineligible for a prize)
Alison Sheehan-Hunt	700
Michael Webb-Ingall & Robbie Ellen	689
Nigel Forde	682
John Fuller	680
Mrs Pearce	645
W. A. Kyle	639
Jeffrey Dowse & Piers Burton-Page	617
The Mossfield Gang	610
Alan Hollinghurst	601
Michael & Carolyn Greet	562
Mary Milne-Day, Sara Price & Anne Willits	554
Rosemary Johnson	490
The Old Masters	467
Alan Langley	462
Steve Osborn	446
Tom Durham	423
Tony Lurcock	414
The Hardeners	384
Laurence Inman	320
Kenneth Thornton	315
Rosalind & Peter Bolton	229
Florence Yarwood	210
Eric Love	208
Kenny's Academicals	167
Val Marshall-George	110
Conal P. Darcy	100
Jeff Forgrave	30

REMARKS

First of all I have to apologize for the awful errors in the last Nemo. As everybody except me noticed, there were two quotations from poems by Wordsworth—the result of haste and carelessness on my part when I was doing some last minute revisions to the text; then, as if that wasn't bad enough, John Fuller and others pointed out that the Paul Muldoon poem 'The Mirror' is a translation from the Irish of Michael Davitt's 'An Scáthán', which I really ought to have noticed when I was copying it out. I hope I've done better this time.

Despite my negligence (or maybe because of it) there were fractionally more entries this year, with some former Nemo enthusiasts returning to the fray and no less than three former editors sending in answers. I hope this is an omen, and that numbers will continue to increase over the next few years. It's hard to get young people interested in the quiz, I find, but there are some and may be more. I'm grateful to the many Nemo supporters who have tried and are trying to spread the word, and to those who generously overpay and ask Nemo to keep the change. And I am always glad to hear from people. I like to know what you're thinking, and to receive any complaints (that last year's Almanac was set in too small a type size, for example, as I discovered myself, or that there's too much prose, or not enough), or to take any suggestions. And I would be very happy to have a guest page or two: there haven't been any for a few years, and I'd not like the tradition of guest pages to die out.

The main news since last year is that I've set up a Nemo website. At the moment it has an introduction to Nemo, Alan Hollinghurst's history of the quiz, and instructions for buying copies via PayPal. I intend to expand it to include an explanation of the quiz, and its rules; and perhaps a specimen page or two from past issues. It might become a place for thoughts about the future, too. Anyway, it can be found at **nemosalmanac.com** and it has an email address associated with it, namely nemo@nemosalmanac.com, which can replace my own, or act as an alternative to it.

Nothing else seems very good. Libraries continue to close down, and although independent bookshops and independent publishers are on the increase, that doesn't do much to help with finding quotations. And even the libraries that remain are more likely to have online reference works and search engines than the collected works of minor poets or even major ones. But there are still plenty of ways of searching for quotations without googling them, from scouring anthologies and racking friends' brains to looking up words in the OED. This year every quotation was found, one way or another, although the Matthew Sweeney poem evaded most of you and Gavin Ewart's 'Victorian Singing' proved quite elusive as well. Part of the enjoyment of Nemo, though, is discovering unfamiliar writers, and I hope I can continue to include a few testing quotations among the more easily findable ones. There's plenty of time, after all, especially if you can manage to keep searching from time to time all through the year. Anyway I hope this 129th issue of the almanac will provide an adequate mixture of pleasure and frustration, despair and triumph, to keep you going for a while.

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